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AUTHOR	Wagner, Judith O.
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ABSTRACT

Although the ERIC database includes descriptions of documents containing education statistics, it is not designed to provide answers to specific statistical questions. The single best alternative source for statistics regarding all aspects of education and literacy is the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Statistical information can be obtained by calling the information office at NCES; their reports and newsletters can be found at most state, university, and large-city public libraries. Literacy statistics can be located in the report produced by the National Adult Literacy Survey conducted by the NCES in cooperation with the Educational Testing Service. Each state has--or soon will have--a State Literacy Resource Center that will become part of a network of centers to stimulate the coordination of literacy services, enhance the capacity of state and local organizations to provide literacy services, and serve as a link between the National Institute for Literacy (NIL) and service providers. Information and/or statistics on various aspects of literacy can be obtained from the following: Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy; National Center for Family Literacy; Division of Adult Education & Literacy Clearinghouse, U.S. Department of Education; Center for Literacy Studies; Literacy Volunteers of America; NIL; Contact Center Inc.; and National Center on Adult Literacy. (Contains 12 references.) (YLB)

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ERIC Digest No. 140

Judith O. Wagner

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
Center on Education and Training for Employment
College of Education
The Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090

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ERIC *Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education*

Locating Education and Literacy Statistics

by Judith O. Wagner

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Finding specific statistics can be a time-consuming and frustrating experience. Although the ERIC database includes information *about* education statistics, it is not a good source of specific statistical information. This ***ERIC Digest*** suggests alternative sources for obtaining various types of education and literacy statistics and information.

Education Statistics

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), is the best single source for statistics regarding all aspects of education and literacy. NCES provides free products and services to educational researchers and state and local education agencies, including use of questionnaires developed for national surveys and information or tabulations using NCES data sets (OERI 1993b).

OERI materials and information are meant to be used by students, parents, teachers, administrators, librarians, and policymakers at all educational levels. Free and inexpensive products range from publications for parents to help their children learn to comprehensive statistical reports. Statistical databases are available on tape, diskette, and CD-ROM. The OERI toll-free telephone line–**1-800-424-1616**–is staffed by trained information specialists who can respond to requests for information (OERI 1993a).

The Condition of Education, NCES's compilation of statistics, includes "data that measure the health of education, monitor important developments, and show trends in major aspects of education." It also "provides a means to report where progress is being made. . .and where it is not, to draw attention to emerging issues, and to inform the ongoing policy debate" ("Condition of Education 1993").

In addition, NCES publishes reports on specific aspects of education such as teachers, vocational education, adult education, public schools, private schools, and expenditures. Information that can be obtained from NCES publications, such as the ***Digest of Education Statistics,*** and from their information office includes data on program participation, student outcomes, enrollment rates, educational attainment, regulations, and expenditures as they relate to public and private elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. Information about teacher education, teacher-pupil ratios, teacher salaries, and selected characteristics of teachers in all educational settings is also available. The following items in the bibliography are examples of NCES reports: Choy (1993), Gerald et al. (1989), and Snyder (1993).

Vocational education information is included in several NCES publications. Hoachlander et al.'s (1992) review of vocational education from 1969 to 1990 discusses such topics as program participation, student outcomes, labor market participation, Carnegie units, and demographic information about vocational education teachers.

For the specific information that you need related to any type of education statistics, contact:

National Center for Education Statistics
Education Information Branch
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208-5641
(800) 424-1616

In addition to calling the information office at NCES for the statistical information that you need, you will find their reports and newsletters at most state, university, and large-city public libraries. State departments of education and local boards of education will have information about their programs.

Literacy Statistics

During 1992, the National Center for Education Statistics, in cooperation with the Educational Testing Service (ETS), conducted a National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) to "profile the English literacy of adults in the United States based on their performance across a wide array of tasks that reflect the types of materials and demands they encounter in their daily lives" (Kirsch et al. 1993, p. xiii). The study resulted in information on types and levels of literacy skills and the variation in skills across major subgroups in the population. The report explores and analyzes connections between literacy skills and variables such as voting, economic status, weeks worked, and earnings. In addition, the survey characterizes literacy skills in terms of demographics and personal background; characterizes the work force with respect to literacy skills by various occupational categories; compares results with those from other literacy surveys; interprets findings related to information processing skills; and provides increased understanding of the skills and knowledge associated with functioning in a technological society (NCES 1993).

Each state has–or soon will have–a State Literacy Resource Center (SLRC) that will become part of a network of centers to stimulate the coordination of literacy services, enhance the capacity of state and local organizations to provide literacy services, and serve as a link between the National Institute for Literacy and service providers (Office of Vocational and Adult Education 1993). The Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee is one of the newly formed SLRCs. They have information and statistics about programs in Tennessee including a profile of each county. Each of the SLRCs will have similar types of information. Call your state governor's office or the U.S. Department of Education's Adult Education and Literacy Clearinghouse for the location of the SLRC in your state.

Many agencies and organizations focus on some aspects of literacy. Information and/or statistics can be obtained from those listed here.

Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy
Pennsylvania State University
204 Calder Way, Suite 209
University Park, PA 16801-4756; (814) 863-3777

Although they do not have statistical information, the institute staff can provide information about computer software and computer-assisted instruction as it relates to adult literacy. They also have information about adult basic education and General Educational Development (GED) programs, family literacy, and workplace literacy.

National Center for Family Literacy
401 South 4th, Suite 610
Louisville, KY 40202; (502) 584-1133

Division of Adult Education & Literacy Clearinghouse
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Mary E. Switzer Building, Room 4428
Washington, DC 20202-7240; (202) 205-9996

The USDE Clearinghouse provides information and free materials.

Center for Literacy Studies
University of Tennessee
102 Claxton Education Bldg.
Knoxville, TN 37996-3400; (615) 974-4109

The Center has statistical and program information for Tennessee and compiles profiles of each county in the state. A statewide survey regarding literacy is in progress.

Literacy Volunteers of America
5795 Widewaters Parkway
Syracuse, NY 13214; (315) 445-8000

LVA provides information about local programs in adult literacy and English as a second language as well as statistical information.

National Institute for Literacy
800 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006; (202) 632-1500

The National Institute was established to influence national literacy policy by supporting National Education Goal 5: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning and fulfilling the mandates of the National Literacy Act.

Contact Center Inc
P.O. Box 81826
Lincoln, NE 68501-1826
National Literacy Hotline: (800) 228-8813
National GED Hotline: (800) 626-9433

Contact Center provides information on local GED and literacy programs and on state hotlines. They also have an information packet about the GED test that is available upon request. Requests for literacy statistics will be referred to NCES.

National Center on Adult Literacy
University of Pennsylvania
3910 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111; (215) 898-2100

The National Center can provide information about all areas of adult literacy–national and international.

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Office of Vocational and Adult Education. ***Directory of State Literacy Resource Centers.*** Washington, DC: Division of Adult Education and Literacy, OVAE, U.S. Department of Education, July 1993.

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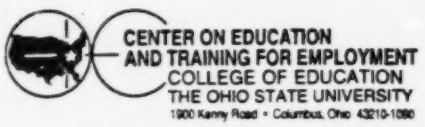
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